

that what they have talked about is to try to give us real understanding about what this debate that we are engaging in this Congress is all about.

The term "reconciliation" may be a term that is not familiar to the American people today, but I suspect in the next 3 or 4 weeks it may become more familiar.

We are going to be talking about a lot of specifics that are contained in the reconciliation bill. We will talk about some provisions of this bill that, frankly, I may not like. I suspect there are few Members on this floor, if they were very candid, who would not point out a provision or two or more of the reconciliation bill that we will be considering that they may not like.

But, instead of focusing on the minutiae, I think it is important for us to step back, as we tried to do during this last 50 minutes of debate, and keep our eye on the ball and talk about the big picture and what is at stake.

My colleague from Pennsylvania, Senator SANTORUM, who just concluded, I think, said it very, very well when he talked about promises that were made. What are those promises? What were those promises? How will this Congress be judged? I think we will ultimately be judged on four things, the four big promises that were made.

First, to balance the budget; to do something that this Congress has not done since I was a senior at Miami University in Ohio in 1969—a long time ago, a quarter of a century—that is to balance the Federal budget, and to set us on the path so that we will, within that reasonable period of time of 7 years, have a balanced budget and do something we have not done for a quarter of a century and to make sure the figures are real, the promises kept.

Second, to save Medicare. I use the term save because, as my colleague from Tennessee, who is currently presiding, has very eloquently pointed out, that is what this debate about Medicare is really all about: to save it, to preserve it, to strengthen it.

Third, is to reform welfare. We passed a welfare bill. The House has passed one. We understand if we are really going to change the direction of this country, we have to first start with a change in welfare.

And the fourth: commitment. The fourth thing I think this Congress will be judged on is our commitment to have a modest tax cut—it is a modest tax cut—for working men and women in this country. So, I think it is important for us to truly keep our eye on the ball.

Let me conclude by saying the comments of my colleague from Tennessee I thought were most appropriate as was the chart that was displayed here a few moments ago. What these promises, once they are kept, will really do is to improve dramatically the quality of life for the average man, woman, and child—particularly child—in this country. Because, as he so eloquently point-

ed out, interest rates and other things that silently affect our ability to purchase a home, for a young, newly married couple to purchase a home, have their interests rates down, to have a newer car, a safer car, all of these will be affected by what we do with the Federal deficit. The quality of life of people who are struggling to get out of poverty will be affected by what we have done and will do in regard to true welfare reform.

I think sometimes we forget the big picture. Sometimes we spend a lot of time on this floor talking about individual bills, which we should, and what impact some small bill, relatively small bill, is going to have on individuals. Sometimes we forget what we do in regard to the big picture, what we do in regard to welfare reform, what we do in regard to a meaningful tax cut for working men and women, what we do in regard to balancing the budget, what we do in regard to saving Medicare. This big picture will affect, ultimately, the quality of life of our children much more than what we do on any individual program.

I again congratulate my colleagues, congratulate my friend and colleague from Tennessee, whose statistics and chart I think pointed that out very, very well. So, as we head into this debate and as we talk about the minutiae of reconciliation—I see my friend from New Mexico, the chairman of the Budget Committee, who is, obviously, going to be involved very much in that debate—I think it is important to keep our eye on the ball, keep our eye on the commitments, what we told the American people we were going to do, why we were coming to Washington. And, as we cast these tough and, frankly, very unpleasant votes we are going to have to cast in the weeks ahead, it is important for us to do that, to keep our eye on the ball and remember the big picture.

Remember, it is the big actions that we take in the four areas I have talked about that are going to impact the quality of life of our children and our grandchildren much more than any one particular bill, any one particular amendment, any one particular vote.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, parliamentary inquiry. Is there any order that we have agreed upon? I do not want to impose if there is.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Senators can have up to 5 minutes. The Senator from Illinois has 45 minutes reserved, which he has not yet used.

Mr. DOMENICI. I wonder if we could complete our argument in about 6 or 7 minutes and then the Senator could have his time?

Mr. SIMON. I yield to my colleague from New Mexico, as I almost always do.

#### THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I am very, very proud of the Republican Senators who have taken to the floor today to talk about the most significant issue for the American people, all of the American people. I know some ask, on whose side are we? We are on everybody's side. Because if you do not get a balanced budget, sooner rather than later, you are probably never going to get one. And if you do not get one soon, you are literally giving away a legacy to the next generation and the next generation that could have been prosperity, economic gain, a better chance to take care of yourselves—you are giving that away by imposing a silent tax on all the young people, all the children yet unborn, where they will have to pay our debt.

You cannot escape it. Some say, what is this debt? This debt means that millions of people, banks, insurance companies, foreign countries, lent us money. We gave them a nice little promissory note, and we said: "Thank you for lending us the money. We will pay you back."

So we owe it—in fact, we owe part of it to the Social Security trust fund. Frankly, sooner or later, the bell will toll. And this is our last best chance to get a real balanced budget. When they ask who are they who are for it, a vision comes to my mind of a big American shopping center with people in the center from all walks of life. If you are in a shopping center in New Mexico, you will see a cowboy with cowboy boots, and you will see a dressed up, almost aristocratic person, and then you will see all ages, some with new T-shirts with their latest words on it of support for the Bulls or the Cavaliers or even the march.

All of those people—not one piece of them, all of them—anxiously expect that the U.S. Government will not let them and their children down as we promise them a decent life and, if they will work hard, a decent return and if we will do our job, that they expect a little better life with each passing decade.

Almost all of that is tied up in whether we get a balanced budget, Mr. President. And I thank you very much, I say to the Senator from Tennessee, for your comments of just how important to every day events a balanced budget is.

I wish to talk today about the President's budget, and I do not know if Members on the other side are up here in the Chamber defending the President's budget. I think we voted on his first budget, did we not, in the budget debate? And I do not think one Senator voted for it. We all forget that. Not one. I think every single Member including everyone on that side voted no.

Now the issue comes, since the President gave us a new budget about 3 months ago, how many on that side of the aisle would vote for it. I am going to try in about the next 5 or 6 minutes to convince the American people that